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UNCLAS CHIANG MAI 000082

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: WALK-IN POLITICAL ASYLUM REQUEST FURTHER REVEALS LIMBO OF SHAN LEGAL STATUS IN THAILAND

REF: CHIANG MAI 59

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. A Burmese national of Shan ethnicity attempted to apply for political asylum May 31 at Consulate General Chiang Mai during a
2. (SBU) At approximately 10 am on May 31, ConOff interviewed U Zau Sam Hlat (DPOB: January 25, 1937, Theinni, Burma), aka Hkun Sam DOUGLAS, who said he was the vice president of the Shan Nationalities League
3. (SBU) As the vice president of an organization that declared independence on behalf of the Shan State, he is considered an outlaw by the Government of Burma and would face persecution should he return
4. (SBU) Hlat said the Burmese agent (an ethnic Sino-Burmese he identified as Seng ZAW) previously threatened other ISG cabinet members and recently visited a temple in Chiang Mai, where he questioned a senior
5. (SBU) Because the RTG does not give ethnic Shan official refugee status (see reftel for explanation), Hlat and his family have lived illegally in Thailand for up to a year and fear that going to Thailand for Moreoever, under an agreement between the UNHCR and RTG, UN officials cannot consult with or process Shan asylum requests in Thailand. ConOff concluded
6. (SBU) After reviewing guidance and consulting with Embassy Bangkok, post concluded that Hlat's concerns did not pose an imminent threat to his safety, and that while his allegations that GOB agents may
7. (SBU) ConOff denied Hlat's visa application under Section 214(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, related the details of UNHCR's inability to formally offer him assistance, and advised him to seek
8. (SBU) COMMENT. Although Hlat's case did not constitute an actionable asylum request, his situation further reveals the limbo in which Shan in Thailand exist. Under normal procedures, post would refer a
- MURPHY